

Inspection of a good school: Charnwood Primary Academy

Purcell Avenue, Lichfield, Staffordshire WS13 7PH

Inspection dates:

14 and 15 September 2022

Outcome

Charnwood Primary Academy continues to be a good school.

What is it like to attend this school?

Parents describe this school as being 'like a family'. Parents and carers praise how the headteacher and staff always make time for, and care about, them and their children. Pupils are happy at school. One pupil summed this up, saying, 'Nurture is very special here... I have always felt welcome.'

Leaders have high expectations for pupils, including those with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). Leaders regularly check what is working well and make effective changes to improve further. For example, adults help pupils develop their play using lots of new resources at break and lunchtimes. Pupils enjoy this hugely and this has led to very good behaviour outside.

Pupils are friendly and polite. They are calm and orderly when moving around. Pupils are usually attentive and work hard. Leaders check pupils' behaviour carefully and ensure support is offered quickly if needed. Pupils are clear that bullying does not happen and are confident staff would resolve any issues if it did.

Leaders excite pupils with a wide range of opportunities that enhance their experiences. They are very keen that pupils learn more through enjoying the richness of the local area. For example, pupils visit Samuel Johnson's birthplace and have watched Peter Pan at the local theatre.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

Reception and Nursery are exciting places to be. Children settle quickly into routines and are happy. Staff are caring and work hard at building relationships with children. Staff take time to share information with parents from the outset. Parents praise leaders for clear communication that helps their children make a successful start to school.

Leaders have high expectations of what the youngest children can achieve and ensure that there are fun activities to help them to learn. Staff interact regularly with children to

improve their skills. For example, children quickly improved their formation of the letter 'y' through repeating a helpful rhyme. Leaders support new staff to ensure they ask lots of questions that encourage children to talk and develop their language skills. Teachers integrate mathematics into activities. In one instance, children were successfully prompted to 'make four' through choosing from a wide range of objects.

Leaders ensure that reading and phonics are a priority throughout the school. They support staff with effective training, so that staff have good subject knowledge and teach phonics confidently. Leaders have updated the books they use, so that pupils access a wide range of texts and classic novels. Older pupils can recall stories they have read and can talk about favourite authors.

In mathematics, leaders have put in place well-ordered topics and lessons. Teachers are therefore clear about what is to be taught. As a result, pupils progress because they build on what they previously learned. Teachers use mathematical resources well to support pupils to tackle mathematical tasks appropriate to their ability. In most lessons, pupils move on to harder problems to challenge them.

Leaders make sure that all pupils study a wide range of subjects. Leaders know where their curriculum works well and where it can improve. For example, leaders have correctly identified that in some subjects, like science and history, some pupils are not able to remember what they have been taught. In response, leaders have built in more opportunities for pupils to revisit what they have already learned. This is starting to help pupils remember more.

Leaders have also introduced a strategy to help pupils think about learning and remembering. Staff use this approach effectively. Pupils explain how they can think 'ahead and back' to link their learning. In one example seen, pupils re-practised fraction work from last year. Pupils said that these strategies help them remember. Staff believe that leaders think about workload when any changes are made.

Subject leaders use assessment effectively to identify the work pupils found hard. Teachers use this information to arrange extra support to help pupils catch up. Staff care for and support pupils with SEND effectively. Leaders identify appropriate small steps for pupils with SEND to work on. In lessons, teachers ask effective questions to help all pupils improve their learning and make progress.

Leaders provide pupils with an abundance of opportunities in addition to their usual subjects. This is a strength of the school. Pupils benefit from a wide range of sport and trips, such as visiting a castle, attending a festival, or performing in football and gymnastics. Pupils enjoy their responsibilities in roles such as librarians and school councillors. They are also proud of their charity work for St Giles Hospice.

Leaders have identified that attendance is not good enough. Too many pupils are absent too often, despite the work done by leaders.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

Leaders and staff identify concerns quickly and respond appropriately. Leaders are relentless in their aim that pupils receive the appropriate support they need. If necessary, the school funds additional support for pupils if external agency support is not available.

Leaders ensure that checks on staff are completed before they start work at the school and these records are well maintained.

Pupils talk confidently about how to keep safe online and know which personal information they must keep private. Leaders monitor carefully how pupils use the internet when they are online.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- There are too many pupils who do not attend school sufficiently well, despite leaders' hard work. As a result, pupils' learning is being adversely affected because they do not come to school often enough. Leaders should continue to support and challenge families to improve their children's attendance at school.
- Leaders have made significant recent changes in some subjects to help pupils remember more of their learning, but these have not yet had time to have the desired impact on pupils' learning. Leaders should ensure that teachers implement and embed the revised curriculum so that gaps in learning are reduced and pupils know and remember more.

Background

When we have judged a school to be good we will then normally go into the school about once every four years to confirm that the school remains good. This is called an ungraded inspection and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school would now receive a higher or lower grade, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection, which is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, Charnwood Primary School, to be good in November 2017.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, '[disadvantaged pupils](#)' refers to those pupils who attract government pupil premium funding: pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years and pupils in care or who left care through adoption or another formal route.

School details

Unique reference number	145680
Local authority	Staffordshire
Inspection number	10241487
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	3 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	240
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of governing body	James Raban
Principal	Katie Stanley
Website	www.charnwood.staffs.sch.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- Charnwood Primary Academy is a smaller than average primary school.
- Charnwood Primary Academy converted to become an academy school in April 2018, when it joined the Staffordshire University Academy Trust. When its predecessor school, Charnwood Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good overall.
- There have been no other significant changes since the last inspection.
- The school does not use alternative provision.

Information about this inspection

- The inspector met with the headteacher, members of the leadership team and numerous subject leaders. There were also meetings with a representative of the board, the acting chief executive officer for the trust and four members of the local academy council, including the chair and vice-chair.
- A range of documentation was scrutinised, including leaders' plans to improve the school and the school website. Minutes of local academy council meetings were also checked.

- Inspectors carried out deep dives in reading, mathematics and history. For each deep dive, inspectors discussed the curriculum with subject leaders, visited a sample of lessons, spoke to teachers, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at samples of pupils' work.
- The lead inspector reviewed the school's safeguarding arrangements. This included examining the record of employment checks on school staff.
- The lead inspector spoke to parents and considered responses, including free-text comments, to Ofsted Parent View, the online questionnaire.

Inspection team

Mark Cadwallader, lead inspector

Ofsted Inspector

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